



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH



## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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### **Student in Grand Forks Elementary School Diagnosed With Active Tuberculosis**

*Total TB cases in Grand Forks now at 16 since October*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Health officials are reporting that a student at Winship Elementary School in Grand Forks has been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). Health officials say this new case is a child connected to the TB outbreak in Grand Forks and the child did not contact TB while attending school. This brings the total number of active cases identified as part of this outbreak to 16.

Parents of children in this classroom are being contacted today with information about testing. Only those children that were in close contact with the active TB case will need to be tested. Testing will take place at Winship Elementary on Monday, Jan. 28, 2013, at 2 p.m.

Tuberculosis is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air when someone with TB disease has coughed or sneezed into the air, usually in an indoor environment. Exposure to tuberculosis includes frequent or prolonged exposure, such as sitting in a small room or confined area for a long period of time with someone who has active TB and is infectious. Not all active TB cases are infectious. This means that students in the same classrooms as the sick children will be recommended for testing, but others in the school may not. If parents have not received information regarding testing, then testing is not being recommended for their child based on the amount of exposure that child has had to the cases.

Health officials continue to do contact investigations to identify people who may have been exposed to the active cases that may be infectious. Those who are considered at risk will be contacted and given guidance about testing procedures. When TB cases such as this are occurring in a community, it takes a significant amount of time to conduct the investigations around each case and complete the testing and treatment needed. It is expected that more cases will be identified.

It's important to remember that not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. There are two different types of TB-related conditions: latent TB infection and TB disease. People with latent TB have the bacteria in their bodies, but they are not sick and cannot spread the TB bacteria to others.

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*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*

However, if TB bacteria become active in the body and multiply, the person will go from having latent TB to being sick with TB disease (referred to as active TB). Both latent TB and TB disease are treatable. Those with TB disease are treated with several drugs for 6 to 9 months. The patient's doctor will monitor how the person is reacting to the treatment, and will do tests that will indicate when the person is no longer infectious. At that point, the person is able to return to normal activities including school and work.

Testing and investigations have shown that these cases identified since October are connected to previously confirmed cases in the area. Here is a breakdown of age and gender associated with the cases:

Age	Cases		
Younger than 10	4		
10-19 years	2		
20-29 years	5	Gender	
30-39 years		Female	8
40-49 years	3	Male	8
50- 59 years	1		
60 and older	1		
Total Cases	16		16

Anyone can get TB. Individuals with weakened immune systems, including those with AIDS or those infected with HIV, are at increased risk. In the United States, the most common risk factors for TB are social factors, such as substance abuse, being incarcerated in a correctional facility, minority populations, being born in a country where TB is more common and homelessness.

The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. The symptoms of TB of the lungs include productive, prolonged cough (duration of three weeks or longer), chest pain, and coughing up blood. It should be noted that symptoms usually develop gradually and last for a prolonged period of time. This is different than symptoms of the flu, which usually come on very suddenly and go away after a couple of days to a week. Anyone experiencing symptoms of TB should contact his or her health-care provider as soon as possible for an evaluation.

The most important way to stop the spread of tuberculosis is to cover the mouth and nose when coughing, and for those with TB to take the prescribed medication as directed. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

For more information, contact Krissie Guerard, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.4555 or Grand Forks Public Health, at 701.787.8100. Information about TB and this outbreak can be found by visiting [www.grandforksgov.com/publichealth](http://www.grandforksgov.com/publichealth).

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